

Jt. Res. No. 96, A.]

JOINT RESOLUTION No. 26.

Relating to the late Captain Pliny Norcross.

*Resolved, by the Assembly, the Senate concurring,* That the following memorial of Hon. Pliny Norcross be spread upon the journals of each house of the legislature:

Pliny Norcross was born in the Town of Templeton, Worcester county, Massachusetts, November 16th, 1838, the son of Franklin Norcross, a farmer and lumberman, and Lydia Powers. The family was of Puritan stock, dating back to early colonial days. In 1852 Franklin Norcross removed with his family to Wisconsin, and settled at La Grange, Walworth county. The father died in 1875 and the mother in 1892.

Pliny Norcross attended Milton Academy for two years and then entered the University, where, on April 16th, 1861, he enlisted in Company K of the First Wisconsin Infantry, under Captain Lucius Fairchild, being the first university student to enlist. Later he became a member of and was for three years captain of Company K of the Thirteenth Wisconsin, in which company two of his brothers served under him. One died at the front.

On January 4th, 1865, he married Phoebe A. Poole. Four children were born of this marriage, Frederick F., John V., Elizabeth L., and Edward P. The two elder sons are lawyers in Chicago, the daughter married a Chicago lawyer, and the youngest son is a physician in Chicago. Mrs. Norcross died in 1900. Later Captain Norcross married Mrs. Frances Spaulding Reddington, of Troy, Pennsylvania, who survives him. He was a most favored man in both marriages and in his children and grandchildren.

After his army service Captain Norcross settled in Janesville and engaged in the practice of law. He was for some years a partner of the late Judge John R. Bennett, afterwards for a year of the late A. A. Jackson, and thereafter as long as he practiced, of the late Judge B. F. Dunwiddie. He then retired from practice and for a short time lived in Brooklyn, New York, but the ties of Wisconsin were strong and he soon returned to Janesville. His investments in Janesville real estate were profitable and he acquired also an interest in the local waterpower. For a number of years he was a successful manufacturer of shoes; he developed the waterpower at Indian Ford and Fulton and established the first permanent electric lighting plant in Janesville.

This property, together with his water power interests, passed later into the hands of the Janesville Electric Company.

Captain Norcross was a member of the Assembly in 1867, 1885, 1905 and 1907, and was always a recognized leader in this body, both in committee and on the floor. During the last two sessions he maintained a home in Madison and both he and his wife were social favorites in the city.

In June, 1904, Captain Norcross was elected Department Commander of the Wisconsin Department of the Grand Army of the Republic. This position was attractive to him and it afforded him unalloyed pleasure to go about the state, attending camp fires and meeting the old veterans in the agreeable social relations of the order.

Governor Davidson appointed him a regent of the University and he served actively in this capacity for several years and then voluntarily retired.

As was said by Reverend Doctor Beaton, his former pastor, at his funeral in the Congregational Church of Janesville, where he had been a regular attendant and a communicant, "Captain Norcross was a man of large and varied interests, throughout his active life." This was a just estimate, for in his youth he had been a good soldier and an efficient commanding officer in the Union army; he was a successful practitioner at the bar; he held the office of district attorney for two terms and was a councilman and mayor of his city; he had successfully pursued manufacturing in Janesville; he was an honored and influential member of the state legislature.

Captain Norcross was always a republican and an active, strong party leader. He was a man of very fine personal presence, of winning manners, and of eloquent speech. In every activity in which he engaged his efforts were marked by the sincerity of his efforts, the steadfastness of his purpose, and by indomitable courage. He was a public-spirited citizen, a faithful public servant, a devoted family man, and a cherished friend and neighbor.

His tragic death by drowning, at Janesville, on Sunday, July 11th, 1915, was a shock to his wide circle of friends. He will be greatly missed. It may be truthfully said of him, "Well done, good and faithful servant. After a long and fruitful life, enter into your eternal, well-earned rest."